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April 14, 2020

The John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award Committee
JFK Presidential Library and Museum
Columbia Point
Boston, MA 02125

To whom it may concern:

Our country and the world are in the midst of a challenge unlike anything we have experienced in modern times. There is no playbook for this healthcare crisis and the magnitude of the human suffering continues to present itself in real time each and every day. One thing that sets our country apart is the unparalleled dedication and sacrifice of so many Americans as we navigate these uncharted waters. We cannot put to words the gratitude we share for the dedication of so many in the face of great harm.

In the midst of so many heroes, we have just witnessed a true Profile in Courage in the unselfish acts of Captain Brett Cozier who stood up for his crew when others failed to act, who put himself in harm's way to protect the men and women under his command, and who took the incredible courageous and unselfish act to reach out for the health and safety of his crew when others turned away four previous requests. For this we must stand up and recognize this incredible patriot for his incredible record of service to our nation and for his recent act of bravery to protect the men and women under his command. Let his service and actions serve as a point of inspiration for all Americans. If ever there was a Profile in Courage, it is the story and recent actions of Captain Brett Cozier.

Captain Crozier's dedication to this nation includes 28 years of distinguished service including graduation from the United States Naval Academy, designation as a Naval Aviator, and numerous successful commands and deployments. Most recently he served as the Commanding Officer (CO) of the aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, where he displayed tremendous courage by exposing the dire situation and lack of adequate support facing the thousands of U.S. service members under his command from the deadly COVID-19 virus. Crozier found himself in an untenable situation, one in which his superiors denied his requests on four separate occasions to protect the health and well-being of the 5,000 sailors under his command.

As a result of his actions, Crozier was publicly criticized by the Acting Secretary of the Navy and others who sought to deflect their inaction to Crozier's prior pleas for assistance. He was subsequently relieved of his command without an investigation, and the men and women under his command were forced to listen to an assault of this hero's character. This assault was met with a very verbal chorus of boos from the crew of the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, and

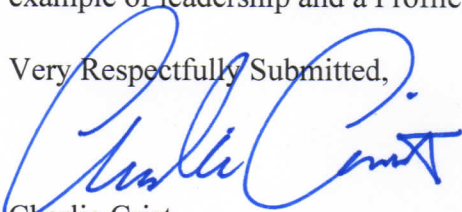
subsequently, the Acting Secretary of the Navy was forced to resign his position amid a public outcry repudiating his comments.

We entrust and hold our military leadership to a higher standard. Captain Crozier exemplifies servant leadership, protecting the best interests of those under his command. We also expect nothing less than truthfulness and an absolute duty to protect the safety and well-being of those under his command especially when faced with extreme circumstances such as that presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Captain Crozier's actions were courageous and in keeping with those principles. He chose to selflessly sacrifice his career to better secure the safety of his crew – a Profile in Courage.

In his memo shared with the public, Capt. Crozier writes, "However, we are not at war, and therefore cannot allow a single Sailor to perish as a result of this pandemic unnecessarily. Decisive action is required now..." We now know he could not save all the Sailors in his command from the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, but his example, actions, and transparency have inspired and without question saved the lives of his sailors and U.S. service members stationed around the globe.

With a distinguished military career of nearly 30 years, Capt. Crozier knew his actions would likely be his last in uniform. He did so anyway because it was the right thing to do – a true example of leadership and a Profile in Courage.

Very Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charlie Crist", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Charlie Crist
UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN